A SHORT ACCOUNT and DEFENCE OF THE *ATHANASIAN* CREED,

With respect to the

Doctrine of the TRINITY,

IN LETTERS

Occasionally written to his FRIENDS

BY

THOMAS TROUGHEAR, D.D.
Rector of *Northwood*, &c.
In the Isle of *Wight*.

Μη ὑπερφρονειν παρ' ὁ δει φρονειν, αλλα φρονειν εις το σωφρονειν. *Rom.* 12. 3.

OXFORD,
Printed at the CLARENDON PRESS.
MDCCLX.
Sold by *Dan. Prince*, in *Oxford*; and *John Rivington*, *in* St. *Paul*'s Church-Yard, *London*.

Imprimatur,

JO. BROWNE VICE-CAN.

Mar. 12. 1760.

SIR,

TO what I have ſaid in the following Letters, which were firſt publiſhed ſome Years ago in *Hooker's Weekly Miſcellany*, and which you now adviſe me to reprint in the preſent Form, give me leave to premiſe by Way of Preface, that the chief and fundamental Article of the Chriſtian Religion, upon which the Goſpel Diſpenſation is founded, *viz.* God's ſending his Son to take our Nature upon him in Order to redeem and ſanctify it by his Blood; this Article, I ſay, is deny'd by our modern *Hereticks*, as it was by ſome in the primitive Church; for there were very early in the Church, as well as at this Day, ſuch as oppos'd it, and thereby put quite another Face upon Chriſtianity. They did, and ſome do now, interpret away that moſt glorious Manifeſtation God ever made of himſelf to Mankind. They ſhut their Eyes againſt thoſe Myſteries, which are moſt clearly and expreſly reveal'd to them in the

Gospel, and have render'd the Church of Christ little more than a School of Philosophy. Nor is it Matter of Wonder, that they do so, if we consider, that *Arians* and *Socinians*, instead of allowing the Scripture to be the Rule to form their Opinions by, have made their Opinions the Rule of interpreting Scripture, and that in Doctrines of the greatest Weight and Importance, even in Matters of Faith, and on which their eternal Salvation depends. And indeed this we must expect; for St. *Paul* tells us, that Heresies shall be, and we may suppose that God permits them, that the Church may be still in a State militant here upon Earth. But it is our Duty to oppose and confute them. And our *Arians* and *Socinians* should consider; that if *Christ* be a Creature, how can God command all Christians to worship and adore him? as it is plain from Scripture he did, and the very Angels too. So that if *Christ* be God, then these *Hereticks* are to pay him Homage due to his Divinity. God can no more strip himself of his Sovereignty, than of his Being. He can as soon take a mere Creature to his Throne, as make over to one his peculiar Title to Adoration and Worship. God, we are told by the Prophet *Isaiah*, Chap. 42. 8. said, *I am the*

the Lord, that is my Name; and my Glory will I not give to another; as if he had said, My Name is *Jehovah*, which denotes me to be the only true God: And I will assert my Honour and not suffer false Gods or Creatures to usurp that Honour or Glory, which is due to myself alone; for so the *Hebrew* Word *Gabod* and Δόξα in the *Septuagint* do properly signify. Now it is certain, that our Saviour himself told the *Jews*, *John* 5. 25. *that all Men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father*: and, *that He that honoureth not the Son, honoureth not the Father, which hath sent him.* So that our Saviour must be the *Jehovah*, the Lord, *equal to his Father as touching his Godhead.* Besides we are assured, that the Apostles worshipped him at his Ascension, *Luke* 24. 52. As did also St. *Stephen* at his Death, and St. *Paul* at his Conversion. If therefore *Christ* was not God as well as Man, they were guilty of Idolatry. And what can clash more directly with all Laws natural and divine, than Idolatry does? If this spiritual Adultery be innocent, what can be criminal? and if God can command so sacrilegious an Action, what can he forbid? In short, God commanded all the Angels to worship *Christ*, *Heb.* 1. 6. He therefore must be God, as well as Man, as I

ſaid before: *Equal to the Father as touching his Godhead*, though *inferior to the Father as touching his Manhood.* The *Jews* flattered themſelves with a *Meſſiah*, who ſhould make his Entrance among them in worldly Pomp and Magnificence, loaden with Spoils and moſt famous for his Conqueſts, making them thereby the Lords of the whole Earth. Now we aſſert that our *Jeſus* was a moſt victorious *Meſſiah*, not ſuch indeed as they expected; but wherein he differed, his Atchievements and Glories were ſingular and more conſpicuous; He cured all manner of Diſeaſes, raiſed the Dead, and triumphed over Devils. And never was there ſuch a Defeat given, never thought of before, as when *Death* was overcome by dying, diſarm'd by him, that ſeem'd its Prey and Priſoner, and when all the Powers of Hell were ſhaken and ſubdued by their own, as they thought, proſperous Stratagems. So that we may juſtly affirm that his divine Nature wrought the Miracles, and his human ſuffer'd the Afflictions, and that though the Temple of his Body ſeem'd to be deſtroy'd by Death; yet himſelf by his Divinity did on the third Day raiſe it up again for our Juſtification. The Body, it is true, fell, and the human Soul was ſeparated from it, but

his

his divine and human Natures ſtill continuing united, his Godhead reſtored the one to the other; ſo that what he declared to the *Jews*, is moſt true, that he himſelf would raiſe it up again; and that *he had Power to lay down his Life, and had Power to take it again.* *John* 10. 18.

Another Argument for our Saviour's Divinity may be taken from what he condeſcended to do in Order to convince St. *Thomas* of the Truth and Reality of his Reſurrection. He repeated the very Words, which he had ſaid to his Brethren, which was a Proof of his Omnipreſence and Omniſcience, and he gave him ſuch ſenſible Evidence of the Reality of his Body, as convinced and made him acknowledge, that a Perſon able thus to know his Words and Thoughts and raiſe himſelf from the dead, muſt needs be his very Maſter *Jeſus*, and his very *Lord* and *God*. The Apoſtle, now fully convinced, admires and adores him, as the almighty and everlaſting God. And indeed the Original here, as it is obſerved by ſome learned Men, is in Terms ſo ſtrict and with ſuch an Addition of the *Greek* Article, as ſome *Hereticks* even confeſs to be a Character of the Word *God* being taken in

its

its proper and natural Sense, and intended of the only true God.

As to a farther Proof of our Saviour's Divinity, need I mention, that there are in the *Pentateuch* express Prophecies concerning him, which were punctually and literally fulfilled? Let any one read *Deut*. 18. 15, 16, 17, 18, 19. and deny this, if he can. Here is a Prophecy delivered 1400 Years before the Event and literally fulfilled, as appears in the Gospel. If any Person would see or be fully acquainted with the Proofs taken from the old Testament of the Nature and Dignity of our blessed Saviour *Jesus Christ* and of the Holy Spirit; I cannot do any Thing better than to recommend to him a serious Perusal of the eight Sermons preached at the Lecture founded by the honoured Lady *Moyer*, by the very learned and worthy *James Knight*, D. D. Vicar of St. *Sepulchre's London*, whom I had the Honour to be acquainted with at *Oxford*, when he was Fellow of St. *John Baptist's* College there. On this Occasion also I take the liberty of recommending an accurate and excellent Performance of the Reverend Dr. *Randolph*, the present worthy *President* of *C. C. C.* in Answer to the late Bishop of *Clogher's* Essay on *Spirit*. And if any Person

is

is desirous to have a full and perfect Knowledge of the Nature of Christiam Faith, let him read the Sermons preached at the Lady *Moyer*'s Lecture by my old intimate Friend Dr. *Felton Principal* of *Edmund Hall*. He will there find the Christian Faith clearly and fully explained and asserted against *Deists*, *Arians* and *Socinians*; the Divinity of the Son and Holy Ghost fully and clearly proved, as also the Unity of the Godhead, as expressed in the *Athanasian* Creed: And he very justly observes, *Page* 429. that in this Controversy we cannot depart from this Creed without going into the *Arian* or *Socinian* Creed. And here give me Leave to observe, that in this Creed, as expressed in our Liturgy, there is not one Sentence that cannot be proved from Scripture; for even the *damnatory* Sentences, as they are usually called, may clearly and most expresly be proved from it. What in this Respect can be more clearly expressed, than in the Words of St. *Mark* 16. 16. *He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned*, or condemned, *i. e.* in the Day of Judgment; for the *Greek* Verb, here used by the Evangelist, is used in *civil Courts*, and implies first, the pronouncing of Sentence upon a Malefactor,

factor by a Judge: and so it is used by our Saviour himself in St. *John*'s Gospel, Chap. 8. 16. Again, secondly, this *Greek* Verb κατακρίνω, signifies a pronouncing of Sinners guilty, and adjudging them to Punishment upon Conviction of a Fault, as St. *Paul* seems to intimate in *Rom.* 8. 34. And here by St. *Mark* it is used in Opposition to the *Greek* Verb, which signifies to be saved. And what we are here told by St. *Mark* our blessed Saviour said to his Disciples, may be farther confirmed by what he said in *John* 3. 17, 18. For though the simple Verb κρίνω is here used by St. *John*, yet it is often in Scripture taken in the worst Sense for the compound Verb καταικρίνω, which properly signifies to condemn; as in *Rom.* 14. 3. and 2 *Thess.* 11. 12. where the Apostle's Words are very remarkable, and ought by every Christian to be remembered. *That all*, says he, *may be damn'd* who *believed* not *the Truth, but had Pleasure in Unrighteousness.* To what has been said upon this Point, I need only add what is said in the last Verse of this third Chapter of St. *John*'s Gospel. *He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting Life; and he that believeth not the Son, shall not see Life, but the Wrath of God abideth on him.* What I have now said or produced, sufficiently,

ficiently, I think, prove the Truth of what is asserted in this Creed with Regard to our Belief of the Unity in Trinity and the Trinity in Unity, and that it is still to be worshipped by us. This is the Catholick or true Christian Faith, which it is necessary that we should constantly hold. And here I may observe, that a mighty Stress is laid upon this Faith throughout the New Testament, as procuring good Acceptance of, and great Rewards for all those virtuous Actions, which flow from a Principle so agreable to the Duty we owe to our blessed Saviour for his revealing such Truths, and enjoyning and most clearly explaining such Duties, as we owe to God, our Neighbours, and ourselves. This will fit us for Heaven and everlasting Happiness, by bringing every Thought in Obedience to the divine Majesty, whom we serve, and removing all Doubts concerning those mysterious Truths, which *Christ*, who cannot deceive us, hath so plainly revealed to us. Our Saviour's Divinity and that of the holy Ghost, are so expressly mentioned in Scripture, that it is Matter of Wonder, that there should be an *Arian* or *Socinian* in any Christian Nation. I have said so much in my two Letters, upon these two Articles of our Christian Faith, which every

Clergyman of the Church of *England* doth subscribe to and profess to believe; that it may be thought needless to add any thing more. But I cannot help adding to what I have said, what St. *Paul* has suggested to us in his tenth and twelfth Chapters of his first Epistle to the *Corinthians*. In the tenth Chapter he plainly ascribes to our Saviour what was done by *Jehovah* in the old Testament, and by Consequence he gives him the Title of the incommunicable Name of the supreme God *Jehovah*. Here where I give the Name of *Jehovah* to our Saviour, let me observe, that the Name sets out God's Eternity, for it implies all Times, past, present, and to come: The three Syllables in the Word *Jehovah* contain the Notes of all Times. The first *Je* signifies the Time to come; the second *Ho* the Time present; and the third *Vah* the Time past. Thus this Title given to *Christ*, our blessed Saviour, "*which is, and which* "*was, and which is to come*," is an express Interpretation of *Jehovah*. See *Rev.* 1. 4, 8. 11. 17. and 16. 5.

The Apostle expressly says, 1 *Cor.* 10. 9. *Let us not tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted and were destroyed of Serpents.* Now whoever consults the Texts there referred to in the

the Margin, *viz. Exod.* 17. 2, 7. *Numb.* 21. 5, 8. *Psal.* 78. 56. and 95. 9. will find that *Jehovah* sent fiery Serpents among the People; and they bit the People, and much People of Israel died. So that as St. *Paul* represents it, the Argument may be framed thus. He that was tempted in the Wilderness is *Jehovah*, says *Moses*; But *Christ* is He, that was tempted in the Wilderness, says St. *Paul* here; Therefore *Christ* is *Jehovah*, and by Consequence true God. I think I have now, with what is hinted in my other Letters, said enough to prove our Saviour's Divinity. I shall only briefly add a Proof or two of the Personality and Divinity of the *Holy Ghost*. I own that by the Holy Spirit is sometimes meant some divine Gift or Grace; but then sometimes it signifies no less than a *Person*, who proceeds from, and is sent by the Father and the Son; as you may find in St. *John*'s Gospel, Chapters 14. 15. Now it is most certain, that the Persons sending, must be distinct from the Person sent. He is also there called *Comforter*, which is a Proof of his Personality, for to comfort is a personal Action. And our Saviour tells his Disciples, that *when they are brought unto Magistrates and Powers, they should take no Thought, how or what they*

should answer, or what they should say: for the Holy Ghost should teach them in the same Hour what they ought to say. Luke 12. 11, 12. This is another plain Proof of both his Divinity and Personality. For most surely a Comforter, a Teacher, and a Remembrancer, as he is called, in the Places above mentioned, must be a Person. But I will add no more at present, than what St. *Paul* has said in the 12th Chapter of his first Epistle to the *Corinthians*, as I hinted before. There the Apostle speaking of the Manifestation of the *Spirit*, informs us; that to one is given by the *Spirit the Word of Wisdom; to another the Word of Knowledge by the same Spirit; to another the Gift of Healing by the same Spirit; to another Faith by the same Spirit: to another Working of Miracles; to another Prophecy; to another Discerning of Spirits; to another diverse Kinds of Tongues; to another Interpretation of Tongues.* And seeing in the 6th Verse the Apostle declares, that *it is the same God, which worketh all in all*; and in Verse the 11th, that *all worketh that one and the self-same Spirit, dividing to every Man severally as He will.* It must therefore necessarily follow, that this one and self-same *Spirit*, who is here affirmed to be an equal Co-Worker with God, must be

be alſo the one and the ſelf-ſame God, unleſs we will make two diſtinct Gods. I may here add what St. *Paul* ſays in the 2d Chapter of this Epiſtle: He applying to the Chriſtian Diſpenſation, in the ninth Verſe, that Paſſage of *Iſaiah*, *Eye hath not ſeen, nor Ear heard, neither have enter'd into the Heart of Man the Things, which God hath prepared for them, that love him*; in the next Verſe aſſerts, *that God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit.* And he gives us the Reaſon of this his Aſſertion; for the *Spirit*, ſays he, *ſearcheth all Things, yea, the deep Things of God.* And he farther intimates, that none but the *Spirit* was ſufficient for this Purpoſe; and therefore all Knowledge of ſuch Things muſt neceſſarily be derived from him alone; and herein lies the Force of what he ſays in the eleventh Verſe, *What Man knoweth the Things of a Man, ſave the Spirit of Man, which is in him? Even ſo the Things of God knoweth no Man, but the Spirit of God.* This in my Opinion proveth, that the Holy Spirit is God, infinite and omniſcient; for no Creature, how excellent ſoever he be, being finite, can of itſelf ſearch or know the deep Things of God. And from hence, I think, it plainly appears that the Holy Ghoſt partakes of the ſame divine

Eſſence,

Essence, Nature, or Substance with the Father and the Son, and that he is a distinct Person from them both; so that we are to believe and worship an Unity in Trinity, and Trinity in Unity, as is revealed in Scripture, though it is a Mystery and above our Comprehension. I will conclude in the Words of our most excellent and orthodox Church; saying, It is meet and right, and our bounden Duty, that we should at all Times, and in all Places, give Thanks unto Thee, O Lord, Almighty, everlasting God. Who art one God, one Lord; not one only Person, but three Persons in one Substance. For that which we believe of the Glory of the Father, the same we believe of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, without any Difference or Inequality. Therefore with Angels and Archangels, and with all the Company of Heaven, we laud and magnify thy glorious Name, evermore praising thee, and saying, Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God of Hosts; Heaven and Earth are full of thy Glory. Glory be to thee, O Lord most high. Amen.

Ita ego credo, laudo & colo sanctam Trinitatem in Unitate divinæ Naturæ.

THOMAS TROUGHEAR Vectensis.

SIR,

THE last time I had the Honour to wait upon you, we accidentally fell into a Discourse about the *Athanasian Creed*, as it is commonly called. The Doctrines of which, as professed in the Church of *England*, you declared, you believed, and expressed a great Concern, that it, and some of its Doctrines, particularly the Equality of the Son with the Father, as delivered in it, should be so much of late objected against. I spoke a great deal then in Defence of both the Creed in general, and that particular Doctrine contained in it; but I could not say so much, as the Importance of the Subject required: And therefore I have given you, Sir, the Trouble of this Letter, and herein represent to you, though very imperfectly, what may be said in Vindication of both, which, I hope, will contribute a little, both towards the Establishment of the Truth, and the Confirmation of your own Faith.

And,

And, Sir, in Respect of the Creed, though the great Learning and Judgment of Dr. *Waterland* will not permit me to assert, that it was, as we now have it, drawn up by *Athanasius* himself; yet give me leave to observe, that it is in its present Form very antient. *Gregory Nazianzen*, who died about twenty Years after *Athanasius*, mentions in his Oration in praise of *Athanasius*, Orat. 21. a Confession of Faith, which *Athanasius* presented to the Emperor, and calls it a *royal Gift, received with great Veneration, both in the East and West.* If this Creed is not that very Gift, it is allowed to be composed from it, or made agreeable to it. Bishop *Sparrow* says of it, that *it hath been received with great Veneration, as a Treasure of an inestimable Price, both by the Greek and Latin Churches.* ----- I look upon it, Sir, as one of the best Guards we have of the Catholick Faith, as always professed in the Catholick Church: And therefore if I shewed any Warmth in my Defence of it, I hope, it is excusable, not only on account of the great Opinion I entertain of it my self, but also of the great Authority and Credit, it hath ever had among all the Orthodox Christians, since it was first published to the World: For you will allow me, Sir, to say,

say, that the Measures of our Zeal are, or ought to be, proportioned to the Worth and Excellence of the Objects of it, and are to be regulated by our Opinions or Judgments of their Importance. They are not my Sentiments only, but of some very good and learned Men, that they who strike at it, strike at the Establishment, not so much of the Church of *England*, as of the Church of *Christ* amongst us, and would have nothing of Christianity at all in the Nation, but every one *left to do that which is right in his own Eyes only*. I know what great Respect and Deference is due, and ought to be paid to all the Persons then present; but especially to you, Sir, who on account of your great natural and acquired Endowments, your good Sense and Learning, and particular Favours to me, have more than a double Title to all imaginable Respect from me; and if I was deficient in paying it, sure I am, I did not intend to be so. I must own, I am one of those Clergymen, who have subscribed to the Truths contained in it more than once, as all Graduates in the Universities, and all Clergymen upon their Institutions into their Benefices must do; and give me leave to add, as all dissenting Ministers must also do, notwithstanding they and their Peo-

 ple

ple talk so much about Creeds and Creed-makers, as I myself know some of them to do. And I verily think, that if I am really persuaded, I have subscribed to any Untruths, I ought to make a publick Recantation, and throw up my Living in Testimony of my Sincerity. I have learnt from *Job* 13. 7. that *we are not to speak wickedly for God, nor to talk deceitfully for him.* And therefore I cannot but highly blame such Ministers, of what Denomination soever they be, as do go or have gone from House to House, as I have been inform'd, and you, Sir, seem'd to acknowledge, some have done, and secretly propagate Notions contrary to this Creed, or labour to lessen its Authority and Influence, seeing they must have subscribed to it, as well as myself. Give me leave, good Sir, to assure you, that there is no Proposition in it, but what may be proved, either from express Words in Holy Scripture, or by necessary Inferences from them. It was drawn up, if not by *Athanasius* himself, very early according to his and the *Antenicene* Fathers' Confession of Faith, in Opposition to the Opinions and vain Sophistry of such Hereticks, as denied some Articles of the Christian Faith, and yet would subscribe to the Creeds or Confessions then in Use, by

Equi-

Equivocations and Evasions taking them in a different Sense from what the Catholicks took them in.

And therefore, as I said before, this is the best Guard or Fence we have of the Christian Faith, as it was believed and professed in the primitive Church. And hence it is, that our modern *Arians* and *Socinians* so much decry this Creed, and labour to throw it out of our publick Confessions of Faith: because if this was once laid aside, they could subscribe to the other, and hold their Preferments with a great deal of Ease and Pleasure, and undermine Christianity and the Church, at the same Time they enjoy those Privileges and Advantages, which the State has been pleased to appoint for the Support of both amongst us. But where then is their Integrity!

This was, Sir, composed chiefly to hinder the ill Effects, and oppose the Evasions of the *Arian*, *Sabellian*, *Macedonian*, and *Apollinarian* Heresies: and therefore it chiefly regards the Doctrines of the Trinity and the Incarnation of our blessed Saviour. It would take up too much Time, and I should trespass too much upon your Patience, if I should run through every Proposition in it, and shew what Heresy it was designed to obviate: At present I

shall confine myself to the Equality of the Son with the Father, which was the chief Subject of our late Discourse, being ready to give what satisfaction I can to you, Sir, or to any other Person in Respect of any other Doctrine contain'd in it.

But before I enter upon the direct Proof of the Equality of the Son with the Father, as touching his Godhead: In order to set before you in a clearer Light the Excellency of this Creed, I must begin at the third Verse of it, where it is declared, what the Catholick Faith is, *viz.* that we worship one God in Trinity, and Trinity in Unity. This our Church does in many Places of our admirable Liturgy, in Conformity to primitive Antiquity. She does it in her Doxologies, Hymns, Creeds, in her smaller Litany, as well as in the Beginning and the End of her larger; in some of these we celebrate the Praises of, in others profess our Belief in, or invocate the Holy Trinity, besides what is said in the Conclusion of many of our Collects. Our smaller Litany, *Lord, have Mercy upon us*, &c. was antiently used both in the *Eastern* and *Western* Churches, having been order'd by an old Council to be used every Day in the publick Service. But what I would chiefly here observe, is that the

Tri-

Trisagium or Thrice-Holy, expressive of the Trinity in Unity, was taken by Christians of the first Ages of the Church into their Offices for the Holy Sacrament, and is of divine Original, being taken from *Isaiah* 6. 3. and *Revel.* 4. 8. for as the Thrice-Holy is expressive of a Trinity of Persons, so is *Lord God of Hosts* of the Unity of their Nature. So conformable is our excellent Church to the Practice of the Primitive! So well has she guarded the Doctrine of the ever-blessed Trinity, and fenced it on every Side! And so weak or wicked are such of our Dissenters, as reject publick Forms of Prayer as such, seeing they were always in use, and are the best Preservatives of the Doctrines of the Church, and consequently of the Gospel!

The fourth and fifth Verses of this Creed are level'd against the *Sabellians* and *Arians*, *neither confounding the three Persons* in the Unity of one God, as the *Sabellians* confounded the Son and the Holy Ghost with the Father, making the three Persons but one Person: *Nor dividing the Substance*, by making so many different Substances or Natures, as there are different Persons, as the *Arians* did. In Opposition to the former, we profess in the fifth Verse to believe, *that there is one Person*

of

of the Father, another of the Son, and another of the Holy Ghost: and that this Distinction is not nominal only but real, will afterwards appear in the 21, 22, and 23 Verses. But then in opposition to the latter, *viz.* the *Arians*, we also profess to believe, as is expressed in the 6th Verse, that the Godhead or divine Substance of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost is all one, both in Kind and Number, by an unspeakable Union; for the divine Nature cannot be multiply'd nor divided. And so the Glory of each Person is equal to the Glory of either of the other two, and the Majesty of all the Three is co-eternal, *i. e.* having no Beginning, and will have no End; for the Nature being one and the same undivided in all, the Glory and Majesty must be so too. And hence it is, that all the essential Attributes of the Divine Nature are common to all the Three Persons, as it follows in Verse the 7th, and it may very easily be proved from Scripture, that the Son and the Holy Ghost are equally with the Father Eternal, and equally infinite in Power, Dominion, Wisdom, and Knowledge, *&c.* Instances of these essential Attributes are given in the 8th, 9th, 10th, 13th, 15th, and 17th Verses, which belong to all the three distinct Persons: And yet their

Unity

Unity or Non-division is sufficiently guarded by the 11th, 12th, 14th, 16th, and 18th Verses, which is also evident from *Deut.* 6. 4. *Mark* 12. 29. 1 *Corinth.* 8. 4. and many more Texts, which it would be as unnecessary, as tedious to mention here. And though we are taught in Scripture *to acknowledge every Person* distinctly and *by himself to be God and Lord:* yet *are we forbidden* by the same Scripture *to say, there be three Gods or three Lords,* Verses 19th, 20th. But still though this Unity of the Divine Nature is thus clear and manifest, and the three Persons have the same common essential Attributes; yet have they especial Properties, by which they are really distinguish'd from one another. One Person is not another, and they are not one Person but three Persons, being distinguish'd by their personal Properties, as expressed in the 21st, 22d, and 23d Verses. *The Father is made of none, neither created nor begotten; the Son is not made nor created, but begotten of the Father alone* from all Eternity, and not in Time as the *Arians* maintained; for the Father was always Father, and the Son always Son, and did not become either of them so, in any Time, with respect to each other, as in *Matt.* 3. 17. *John* 1. 1, 2. 14. 18. and in many more Places:

Places; and therefore by this personal Property the Son is really and truly distinguish'd from the Father, who is of none. And the Holy Ghost is not of the Father alone, but from both Father and Son, and therefore is distinct from both; but how he proceeded from them, or how the Son is begotten of the Father, you see, Sir, is not here explained, but is a Mystery and inexplicable. The Creed goes no farther than the Scripture, and asserts only that these Things are so, without pretending to shew the Manner, how they are so; and it is owing to Mens' Ignorance or Wilfulness, when it is accused of pretending to explain Mysteries or what is inexplicable. But now that the Holy Ghost doth proceed from both the Father and the Son, is evident, because he is the Spirit of the Son as well as of the Father, and was sent by the one as well as by the other, *John* 14. 26. and 16. 7, 14. *Rom.* 8. 9. *Gal.* 4. 6. *Phil.* 1. 19. 1. *Pet.* 1. 11. So that there is a Trinity of (or three) Persons in the Unity of the Godhead. And seeing there is a Difference of Order, a First, a Second and a Third Person, unbegotten or unoriginate, begotten and proceeding in the Holy Trinity; we may allow Subordination in this Respect, which makes that Text of

St. *John*

St. *John* 14. 28. plain, where he says, *My Father is greater than I*, if it should be supposed to be taken in Respect of his Divine and not his Human Nature only; for according to the Christian Oeconomy we allow a personal Dignity to the Father above the Son: but then, as it is expressed in the 24th Verse of this Creed, *none is afore or after* either of the *other* with Regard to Time or Duration, and *none is greater or less than another* in Point of essential Dignity or Perfection of Nature; *but the whole three Persons are co-eternal together and co-equal.* And here is no Contradiction; for we do not take this Co-eternity or Co-equality, this Priority and Subordination in one and the same Respect: But the former is taken in an *absolute* Sense with Regard to their Nature, which is one and the same undivided in all the Three Persons, and therefore can have no Priority or Inferiority in it; and the latter is understood in Respect of their Order, that the Father has a *relative* Superiority or personal Dignity, in that he is the Fountain of Divinity, God of and from himself, and that the Son has his Essence and Divinity communicated to him by, or derived from the Father, and in this *relative* Sense is subordinate to him: for we say, that the Son

 is

is of the Father, and therefore the Second Person, and the Holy Ghost of both, and therefore not the Second Person as the Son is, but the Third. So that it is concluded in Verse 25th, *that the Unity in Trinity, and the Trinity in Unity* (or the Three Persons in the Unity of the Godhead, or as the one God) *is to be worshipped* distinct without Division, and united without Confusion; as is evident from the Form in Baptism, and the Apostolical Benediction, 2 *Cor.* 13, 14. to mention nothing else. The Ancient Fathers, who urged the Words in the Form of Baptism against the *Arians*, have observ'd; that it is not said, *in the Names* in the Plural, but, *in the Name* in the Singular, as designing an Authority common to the Three Persons, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; the Unity of Nature being thus included in the Unity of Name, which is that of God, since Baptism cannot be supposed to be administer'd in the Name of any but God alone.

What follows, Sir, is in Opposition to the *Eutychian* and *Apollinarian* Heresies, the former of which confounded the two Natures of *Christ*, making the Human to be wholly absorpt in the Divine, and not to remain distinct in his Person; and the latter took away the

the Human Soul, and put the Divine *Logos* in its Place. The former deny'd him to be both God and Man, and the latter to be full and complete Man. But *he is perfect God*, as is expressed in the 32d Verse, having the Divine Nature; and *also perfect Man*, having the Human Nature complete in both its Parts, *i. e. subsisting of a reasonable Soul, and human Flesh or Body*. Hence he is, as is said in the 33d Verse, by Consequence *equal to the Father as touching his Godhead*, or Divine Nature, and at the same Time *inferior to the Father as touching his Manhood*, or Human Nature. And yet he is not two *Christs*, but one *Christ*, Verse 34th. *Not by Confusion of Natures*, as the *Eutychians* held; but by an entire Union of two distinct Substances in one Person: just as the Soul and Body united, though distinct Substances and different in their Natures, do not make two Men, but one Man. But how this Union is made, is a Mystery still, and not here explained; just as the Union of the Soul aud Body in Man is mysterious and incomprehensible, and consequently inexplicable, though that there is such an Union none will deny. And therefore those that find fault with this Creed, as if it pretended to explain what is mysterious and

unreveal'd, are in a great mistake; for it does not explain the Manner, how the Union of the two Natures in *Christ* is made, which is a Mystery and unreveal'd; but only obviates the false Interpretations of Hereticks, and informs us in what Sense this and such other Objects of our Faith, as are reveal'd, as far as they are reveal'd, are to be taken. And the Illustration of this Hypostatick or personal Union, by the Union of the Soul and Body in Man, is vastly fine and persuasive; for I defy any Philosopher or Metaphysician of the highest Wit and deepest Penetration, to explain to us the Manner, how this Soul and Body are united together.

I have been forced, Sir, to place these Verses in this Light, that I might render, what I have farther to offer to your Consideration in Relation to the Equality of the Son with the Father, as touching his Godhead, as it is expressed in this Creed, more evident and convincing.

In Respect of this Equality you may remember, Sir, I said in our Discourse, that all those Texts which proved *Christ* to be really and truly God, such as *John* 1. 1, 2, 3. and *Col.* 1. 16. imply'd that Equality; because the Godhead being infinite, can admit of no Degrees.

Degrees. They must, though different Persons, be one God, or *Christ* must not be God at all. I think all Philosophers agree, that Infinity, which is implied in the Notion or Idea of God, admits of no *Magis* or *Minus*, is not more or less so. But not to insist upon metaphysical Arguments; I will confine myself to what is said in Scripture and the antient Fathers, in Proof of this weighty Point. In the former, *Christ* is represented as the Father's only begotten Son, in such a Sense as no Creature is or can be, which destroys both the *Arian* and *Socinian* Hypotheses, if duly attended to. For if he were a Creature, though never so excellent, the Title of *Only Begotten* could not belong to him. He would then be made or created, as other Creatures are, though superior to them, and differ from Angels in Excellency of Nature only, as they do from us; and be a Son in the same Sense they and we are Sons; because on this Supposition he would be a created Being as they and we are. The Word Creature would be still predicated of, or common to us all. The Title of *Only Begotten Son* must imply, that none else are Sons as he is, and consequently must infer a Communication of his Nature from the Father; but how that Communication

tion

tion is made, this Creed does not ſay; it is ſtill, as I ſaid before, a Myſtery, and not to be comprehended or explain'd by us.

Give me leave, Sir, to obſerve here, that *John* 1. 3. does of itſelf wholly overturn the *Arian* Hypotheſis; for if *Chriſt* the *Word made all Things*, and *without him was not any Thing made that was made*, then he could not be made or be a Creature himſelf, unleſs he made himſelf; but this would imply a Contradiction, and ſuppoſe him to be and not to be at the ſame Time. And again, this very Text compared with *Col.* 1. 16. evidently overthrows the *Socinian* Scheme, and proves our Saviour to have had a Being, or to have exiſted before he was born of the *Virgin Mary*, and that the Creation of the *material* World is to be aſcrib'd to him, as well as the new Creation or Renovation of the *moral* World. For in *Coloſſ.* 1. 16. it is expreſly ſaid, that *all Things in Heaven, Principalities and Powers were created by him.* Now the Angels, which kept their firſt State, did not want a new Creation or Renovation in a moral Senſe at our Saviour's coming, or at the Beginning of the Goſpel-Diſpenſation, and the Devils had it not granted to them; for, if we will believe St. *Jude, they are reſerved in everlaſting*

Chains

Chains under Darkness, unto the Judgment of the great Day. Jude 6. God hath so loved Mankind, that he hath given them a Mediator and Redeemer, but the Devils have had none. And this puts me in Mind of another Text in *Hebr.* 2. 16. *He* (Christ) *verily took not on him the Nature of Angels, but he took on him the Seed of Abraham:* the former Part of the Verse is an invincible Proof of *Christ*'s essential Divinity, as the latter is of his real Humanity; and the whole is an undeniable Argument against what both the *Arians* and *Socinians* maintain. *He took not on him the Nature of Angels*, or he took not hold of Angels to redeem them; and yet can it be thought, that if according to *Arius*, he was one of the supremest Order of Angels, he would not have laid hold of them, to save them from sinking in everlasting Destruction, if he *could?* or if, according to *Socinus*, he was but a mere Man, can we imagine, how he could have assumed the Angelick Nature to redeem it, if he *would?* And yet the Text supposes, that he could have assumed either the one or the other, which he pleased; and also implies, that he must of Necessity have been of a different Nature from either of those two Natures, which he had in his Power and Choice

Choice to have assumed: and what other Nature besides the Divine can be ascribed to him, I leave to them to find out.

I must farther observe, Sir, that the *Jews* supposed, the Son of God was God and equal to the Father, and therefore sought to slay *Jesus*, because he said, he was the former, which imply'd the latter. *John* 5. 18. I have, Sir, more than once mention'd this Chapter to you, as what of itself sufficiently proves this Equality of the Son with the Father, and justifies the *Athanasian* Creed, if there were no other Proofs in Scripture for it: Let it then be consider'd a little. The *Jews* supposed the Son of God was God, and therefore equal to the Father; and they sought to slay *Jesus*, because he had asserted the one expressly of himself, Ver. 15th, (See also *John* 10. 33.) and the other by Implication upon their Principles. You will allow, Sir, that our Saviour is represented, as a Man of Honour and Integrity quite through the New Testament. Now as an honest Man should have done, he is so far from undeceiving the *Jews*, if they argued falsely upon their Supposition, *viz.* that if he was the Son of God, he must be God and equal to the Father; that he confirms their Opinion, and proves their Inference, by asserting

ing an Equality of Operation with the Father, Verſes 20, 21. which follows an Equality of Nature; for *Modus Operandi*, as the Philoſophers tell us, *ſequitur Modum Eſſendi: i. e.* the Manner or Meaſure of Acting follows the Manner or Meaſure of Eſſence: *i. e.* if he were not equal to God in Nature, and conſequently in Power, he could not do what God did. And then he aſſerts, that divine Worſhip or Honour is to be paid to the Son as well as to the Father; which is not to be done *Deut.* 6. 13. 5. 20. and 1 *Sam.* 7. 3. *Matth.* 4. 14. and *Luke* 4. 8. unleſs he were really and truly God, the Lord God of *Iſrael*. After this he makes uſe of four Arguments to prove himſelf God, and conſequently as they ſuppoſed, equal to the Father. The firſt is at Verſe the 28th, where he aſſerts in expreſs Terms, that by his Voice he ſhould raiſe and judge all Mankind, which implies infinite Power and Knowledge; for none can raiſe all, but he that has all Power; and none can judge all, but he that knows all. This Hint to you, Sir, is ſufficient; if I leave any Thing here, not made clear enough, upon the leaſt Intimation I will endeavour to explain it more fully.

The next Argument is the Testimony of *John* the Baptist, whose Testimony they ac-acknowledg'd to be true, because they esteem'd him a Prophet, Verses 32, 33. Now *John* had declared, that he heard him called the Son of God by a Voice from Heaven, *Matt.* 3. 16, 17. *Luke* 3. 22. and *John* 1. 32, 33, 34. And hence he called him *the Lamb of God that taketh away the Sins of the World.* *John* 1. 29. See also *John* 3. 31, &c. And *John* Baptist was counted a Prophet, *Matt.* 14. 5. 21. 26. *Luke* 20. 6. and the Testimony of a Prophet upon their own Principles was true.

The third Argument is taken from the Testimony of the Father by the Miracles he did, Verse 36. in Confirmation of the Truth of his Saying, that he was the Son of God. He pursues this Argument more fully in the 8th Chapter, where he assumes to himself, (saying, *Before Abraham was, I am)* the incommunicable Title of the supreme God, *John* 8. 58. and in Verse the 37th, and 38th of the 10th Chapter he asserts, that he was in the Father, and the Father in him, *i. e.* having one and the same Nature or Essence, or as is declared Verse the 30th, *he and his Father are one, i. e.* one God or Being, one in

in Nature or Subſtance: for to ſay that they are one in Reſpect of an Unity of Sentiments or Will only, as the *Socinians* and *Arians* would make us believe, is as abſurd and ridiculous, as if I ſhould ſay, that the Father and an Angel or a glorified Saint are one Being in an abſolute Senſe, becauſe they have no other Will than that of God the Father. In ſhort, Sir, to reduce the Unity of the Son with the Father to a bare Unity of Opinions, ſuch as that of the Diſciples with each other was, and thus to take away from *Jeſus Chriſt* that moſt adorable Unity, by which he is coeſſential with the Father, they muſt deprive him of the Title of God, of the true God, of the great God, which the Scriptures aſcribe to him; they muſt deprive him of the auguſt Dignity of Creator, and of being God over all bleſſed for ever, which the ſame Scriptures every where attribute to him. If it could indeed be proved, that he is no more than merely the Miniſter of the eternal Father; then truly it might be ſuppoſed, that the Unity he has with the Father is no more than that, which the Diſciples had with one another, an Unity of Sentiments, or Conſent of Will and Affections; and not an Unity of Eſſence, or Identity of Nature: but when will it be poſ-

ſible to take away from him all the ſublime Characters of Divinity? Not whilſt we have the Benefit of the Holy Scriptures, and the Uſe of Senſe and Reaſon. *Vigilius* Biſhop of *Tapſum*, writing againſt the *Sabellians*, who confounded the Son and the Holy Ghoſt with the Father, has with a very delicate Turn of Thought and acute Judgment oppoſed them and the *Arians*, who divided the Nature of the Father and the Son, to each other, and confuted both their two oppoſite Hereſies by one and the ſame Sentence: *Jeſus Chriſt* has ſaid, ſays he, *I and my Father are one:* in ſaying, *I and my Father*, he has divided what *Sabellius* wrongfully confounds; and in adding *are one*, he has united what *Arius* ſeparates. I might purſue this Point a great deal farther, if the Compaſs of this Letter would permit; but I am afraid, I ſhall treſpaſs too much, Sir, upon your Patience, by what I have already ſaid, and am yet to offer to you upon this Subject. But I beg leave to proceed to the fourth Argument, which our Saviour uſes in the 5th Chapter of St. *John*; it is taken from the Teſtimony of the Scriptures, Ver. 39. and particularly from what *Moſes* had wrote of him, Verſe 46. See *Gen.* 3. 15. and 49. 10. *Deut.* 18. 15, 18. I might mention a great many

many more Texts from the *Pſalms*, *Iſaiah*, *Jeremiah* and other Prophets; but 'tis needleſs to do it to you, Sir, who have been converſant in the Scriptures, or as St. *Paul* ſaid of *Timothy*, have known them from a Child.

The next Argument I ſhall make uſe of, Sir, to prove the Equality of the Son with the Father, as touching his Godhead, is taken from *Phil.* 2. 6, 7. The Apoſtle there teaches us a Leſſon of Humility from the Example of *Chriſt*, *who being in the Form of God*, *i. e.* being God, thought it no Act of Preſumption or Robbery to take upon him the Style and Title *of being equal to God*; yet did not take upon him as God's Equal, made no Oſtentation of his Deity upon Earth; but willingly abaſed and humbled himſelf, *taking upon him the Form of a Servant*, or becoming Man. Where it is evident, that our Saviour ſubſiſted, or was *in the Form of God*, before he took upon him *the Form of a Servant*, or became Man. By this is the wonderful Condeſcenſion of our Lord exhibited to us; in that he deſcended from the higheſt State to the loweſt, and became real Man for us, who are in the loweſt Rank of Intelligent Beings. As therefore the taking upon himſelf *the Form of a Servant*, does denote his being real Man; ſo

by

by *his being in the Form of God* must be meant his being real God: this is the plain and natural Construction of the Words. *Form* must be taken in one and the same Sense in both Expressions: *i. e.* as *Form* in the latter does signify the Reality of his Human Nature; so in the former it must signify the Reality of his Divine. And this strongly concludes against the *Arians*, that the Nature, wherein the Son of God subsisted before his Incarnation, was not created: for as soon as he took a created Nature, he was *in the Form of a Servant*, which he never was in before he became Man, by this Text. But according to the *Arians*, who make a Creature of the Son of God, existing before he became Man, he must have been *in the Form of a Servant* even before his Incarnation; for every Creature, as such, how excellent soever, is with Respect to God, its Creator, in the Condition of a Servant, and owes him Service and Obedience. From hence I conclude, that the Son of God according to that excellent Nature, in which he subsisted before his Incarnation, was equal to the Father, as the Apostle here asserts. For the Argument lies thus, *Christ, being in the Form of God, thought it no Robbery*, or no taking what did not belong to him, *to be equal with God*: Now

Now if he thought it no *Robbery*, no assuming a Title he had no Right to, by Consequence it was no *Robbery*; and if it was no *Robbery*, no pretending to be what he was not, he must be *Equal*; and if *Equal*, he must be God by Nature, as the Father is. *Clemens Romanus*, who was St. *Paul's* own Companion, and made Bishop of *Rome* by him, and *Hermas* and *Justin Martyr* all give the same Interpretation of this Text that I do; whose Words I will send you, if you desire them. But *Justin Martyr* has so very much about the Godhead and the Equality of the Son with the Father, that it would be endless as well as needless to quote all his Passages. *Tertullian*, who flourish'd in the Middle of the second Century, 130 Years before the Council of *Nice*, wrote a Discourse against *Praxeas* the *Sabellian*, from the whole Tenor of which it is apparent, that *Praxeas'* Heresy in asserting the Father, Son and Holy Ghost to be but one Person, was founded upon these two Suppositions. First, that the Catholicks maintain'd, that the Father, Son and Holy Ghost were of one and the same Substance, and consequently equal as to their Divine Nature, which was true. And secondly, that there could not possibly be, as the Catholicks maintain'd, three distinct

Per-

Persons subsisting in one and the same Nature, which was false. Against this last false Supposition of *Praxeas*, *Tertullian* has these remarkable Assertions, *that the Father, Son and Holy Ghost are of one Substance, and one State, and one Power*, and that they are not *Unus*, one Person, but *Unum*, one Being, plainly alluding to 1 *John* 5. 7.

What we call, Sir, the *Nicene* Creed, is nothing else, but the entire antient Creed of the oriental Churches with some few Explications, to obviate the perverse Interpretations and subtle Evasions of *Arius* and *Macedonius*, made by the Fathers of the Council of *Nice* against the former, who denied the real and true Divinity of the Son, and the Council of *Constantinople* against the latter, who denied the Divinity of the Holy Ghost. The Sum of what they added by Way of Explication to the Rule of Faith with Regard to the Son is this, that he is no Creature, *not made, but very God of very God*, subsisting in the very Substance or Nature of his Father, and consequently equally partaking of the essential Attributes belonging to the Divine Nature with the Father. *Arius* would allow our Saviour to be God, but not God by Nature, a made or created God, an inferior One; created indeed

deed before the World began, but not God from Eternity. So that what is there added by way of Explication to the old Apostles' Creed, which *Arius* would subscribe to, is, as I said before, to obviate his Evasions, and to shew in what Sense the Apostles and primitive *Ante-Nicene* Fathers took the Word *Son* in the Form of Baptism, and this Expression in the Holy Scriptures, *viz. Jesus Christ the only begotten Son of God.*

I might, Sir, prove this Equality from many more Texts, as that he is called by St. *Paul, God over all, blessed for ever. Rom.* 9. 5. and by St. *John, the true God, and eternal Life.* 1 *John* 5. 20. But the 7th Verse of this last Chapter, *There are three that bear Record in Heaven, the Father, the Logos or Word, and the Holy Ghost, and these three are one, i. e. one God* or *Being*; this Verse, I say, is abundantly sufficient for this Purpose. A Verse, which is now, after what Dr. *Mills* in his New Testament, and *David Martin*, Rector of the *French* Church at *Utrecht*, in his Dissertations upon it have said, allowed by all learned Men to be genuine. I think it incontestably appears to be so, because it was read in Churches in the old *Italick* Bible, and made use of by the Catholick Bishops against

the *Arians* in their Confession of Faith delivered to King *Hunerick*; which never would have been done, if it had been a disputable Text. It is quoted not only by *Tertullian*, St. *Cyprian*, *Eugenius*, *Fulgentius*, *Victor*, *Facundus* and *Vigilius* of *Tapsum*, all *Africans*; but also was in the most antient and correct Copies of the *Roman* Church. It is quoted by St. *Eucherius* of *Lyons*; we meet with it also in the *Complexiones* of *Cassiodorius Senator*, where he reads, *& hi tres unus est Deus*, instead of *unum*, either by way of Explication, or trusting to his Memory without consulting the Original. However this proves, that there was such a Text, which is all I alledge it for. Mr. *Twells*, Rector of St. *Matthew's*, *Friday-street*, has defended the Genuineness of this Text with great Learning and Accuracy. I think (for I have it not by me) it is in his Examination of the *Anglo-greek* New Testament, Part II. What more Proofs need we require to pronounce it genuine? *Vigilius* of *Tapsum* urges it strongly against the *Arians*; and not only mentions the three Witnesses in Heaven, but ascribes to every one of them his distinct Name, the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost, and from the End of the Verse concludes their Unity in the Godhead. The

Num-

Number *three* thus reduced to *one* is the total Overthrow of the *Arian* and *Socinian* Heresies; and therefore 'tis no Wonder, that these *Anti-trinitarians* use their utmost Endeavours to throw this Text out of the New Testament and rob us of it: for by these extraordinary Words, *these three are one*, the Unity of Nature in the three Persons presents itself without any Difficulty to the Understanding and Faith of every Christian.

I might here add, that our Saviour was the Lord *Jehovah*, who appeared to *Abraham* and the Patriarchs, and to *Moses* and the Prophets in the Old Testament; and that the Holy Lord of Hosts, whose Glory *Isaiah* saw, Chap. 6. 3. is *Christ*, as we are assured by St. *John* in his Gospel, Chap. 12. 40, 41. I might also here add, how a Hymn call'd ὕμνος ἐνθεος, or *Glory to God on high* was sung to *Christ*, as God, and was in use long before the *Nicene* Council, and is mentioned or alluded to by *Pliny* the younger in his famous Epistle to the Emperor *Trajan*. I might also mention St. *Stephen*'s and St. *John*'s Prayers to our Saviour, which infer his Godhead. I might prove this Point farther from the Sufficiency of his Sacrifice; for though he suffer'd only in his Human Nature, yet the shedding of his

Blood could not have been a ſufficient Attonement for the Sins of Mankind, unleſs it had receiv'd an infinite Value from the Union of the Divine Nature to the Human in his Perſon. And hence the Church of God is ſaid to be purchaſed with his own Blood, *Acts* 20, 28. becauſe it was purchaſed with the Blood of that Perſon, who is God as well as Man. But if any Perſon, after what I have ſaid, does ſtill doubt of the Equality of the Son with the Father; let him ſeriouſly conſider the *Form* in Baptiſm, *Matt.* 28. 19. whereby we are admitted into the Religion of, and profeſs to worſhip Father, Son and Holy Ghoſt. Is it conſiſtent with common Senſe to ſuppoſe, that *Chriſt*, who came to put an End to the Idolatry and Superſtition of the Heathen World, and to eſtabliſh the Worſhip of the one true God every where, ſhould order us to be baptiz'd into the Name, *i. e.* into the Belief and Worſhip of the one true God, and two Creatures of an inferior Nature; as the Son and the Holy Ghoſt muſt be, if they are not the one God, or equally Partakers of the Divine Nature with the Father?

But I am afraid, Sir, I have carried my Reflections too far and am grown tedious. If every thing I have ſaid, be duly conſidered, it

it will take off that Noiſe and Clamour, which the Enemies of the Chriſtian Faith uſually make againſt the *Damnatory* Sentences, as they are commonly called, in the Beginning and End of the *Athanaſian* Creed. For he that obſtinately perſiſts in the Denial of the Holy Trinity, and the neceſſary Doctrines of the Incarnation, *&c.* in Effect denies the whole Oeconomy of the Goſpel; and therefore without Repentance and revoking his wicked Errors can expect no Salvation by it. If this, Sir, gives you any Pleaſure and Satisfaction in reading it, and contributes any Thing to the Confirmation of your Faith, I have my End in writing it; and need, I hope, make no other Apology for ſending it to you, than that I hereby take an Opportunity of ſhewing my own *Zeal for the Faith once deliver'd to the Saints*, and moreover of thanking you for all Favours, and aſſuring you that I am with the greateſt Deference,

SIR,

Your moſt obliged,

And moſt obedient Servant, &c.

SIR,

EVER since I was admitted into the Priesthood, I determin'd with myself, by God's Grace, as at my Ordination in a most solemn Manner I had promised to do, that I would teach nothing, as required of Necessity to Eternal Salvation, but what may be concluded from, and proved by the Holy Scriptures, which contain sufficiently all Doctrine required of Necessity for Eternal Salvation through Faith in *Jesus Christ*. I likewise, as I then promised, resolved with myself to be ready at all Times, according to the best of my Capacity, with all Diligence to banish and drive away all erroneous strange Doctrine contrary to God's Word, to maintain the Truth, instruct the ignorant, and confirm the wavering or doubtful: And here I will borrow an Expression from a late *Weekly Miscellany*, Number CCCLIX. and humbly hope with the worthy Author of it, that that omni-

omnipotent Saviour, who died for me, will give me Resolution to persevere in his Service, and an ample Reward for my best, though weak Endeavours, to promote his Religion. In some measure to fulfil my Engagements, and to shew the Sincerity of my Resolution, when I found the principal and distinguishing Doctrines of Christianity, which regard the Divinity of our Saviour and the Holy Trinity, ridiculed and burlesqued in this Neighbourhood by some, and look'd upon by not a few, either as Points of Speculation only, or as Matters of no Moment, whether we believe them or not, I drew up a Letter in Vindication of the *Athanasian Creed*, and our Saviour's Equality with the Father as touching his Godhead; which Letter being shew'd to some Friends, I was prevail'd upon to let it be sent to the Author of the *Weekly Miscellany*, wherein it was publish'd some time ago.

I shall ever esteem these the principal and distinguishing Doctrines of Christianity, and the Belief of them absolutely necessary to Salvation in this Country, where the Light of the Gospel shines with so great a Lustre, and no Man needs want sufficient and proper Means of Instruction, if he will but attend to, or apply for them. These Doctrines I endeavour'd

to

to prove by Texts of Scripture, ſet in a plain, eaſy and natural Light, without any forced Conſtruction: I ſet them in ſuch a Light as, I thought, would convince every unprejudiced and conſiderate Reader; but to my great Surprize a certain Gentleman, who lives in my Neighbourhood, did lately declare in public Company and before my Face, that he was ſo far from being convinc'd by it, that on the contrary he was by my Letter made more doubtful of thoſe Doctrines, than he was before. Surely this muſt be owing to want of Attention and due Conſideration, and not to want of Capacity, to any Prejudice, or corrupt Mind in him. I cannot in Charity attribute it to the latter, and therefore muſt aſcribe it to the former. I never heard that he was given to Scepticiſm or Infidelity, or that his Mind was poiſon'd by reading the *Independent Whig*, and ſuch like Books; which are here induſtriouſly ſpread about to weaken Men's Faith and corrupt their Manners. I muſt therefore, Sir, deſire you to lend him my Letter again, and let him read it over more attentively. His chief Objection was to that Part of it, wherein I ſay, that the Father is prior to, or before the Son in Order. He does not obſerve, that I there ſay, it is ſo, not in reſpect of their

eſſential

essential Attributes, but in their relative Capacity. My Words are, "*None is greater or* "*less than another in Point of essential Dignity* "*or Perfection; but the whole three* (that is in "this Respect) *are co-eternal and co-equal.* "And here is no Contradiction; for we do "not take this Co-eternity and Co-equality, "this Priority and Inferiority or Subordina- "tion in one and the same Respect; but the "former is taken in an absolute Sense with "Regard to their Nature, which is one and "the same, undivided in all the three Per- "sons, and therefore can have no Priority or "Inferiority in it; and the latter is understood "in Respect of their Order, that the Father "has a relative Superiority or personal Dig- "nity, in that he is the Fountain of Divinity, "God of and from himself; and that the Son "has his Essence and Divinity communicated "to him by, or derived from the Father, and "in this relative Sense is inferior to him, *&c.*" This is all agreeable to primitive Antiquity, and modern Orthodoxy; to what the ancient Fathers asserted, and all our modern sound Divines have said upon this Subject: And if I had not been right, such is Mr. *Hooker*'s Impartiality and unbiass'd Zeal for the Faith once deliver'd to the Saints, that he would not

have publish'd my Letter at all, or I should have had his Remarks upon it in his *Miscellany* before this Day. His very Publication of my Letter is a Vindication of it, or at least an Argument, that it contains nothing in it, but what is consonant to the Analogy of Faith. Desire him, Sir, to consult Dr. *Hammond* upon the Text, *John* 14. 28. before he finds fault with me, and he will find that the Doctor says, *he that sent me is as such* (*i. e.* in that relative Sense) *greater than I who am sent by him*; or Mr. *Burkitt*, who has explain'd this Text more fully. First, he observes, as I also did, that it must be understood with Reference to *Christ*'s Human Nature, as Mediator; for so he was the Father's Servant, and the Father as God was greater than he as Man. Again, says he, the Father may be said to be greater than *Christ* in regard of his Paternity, as being the Fountain of the Deity; the Father is of himself, but the Son is begotten of the Father; but being of the same Substance with the Father, he is consequently God, as the Father is God: For the Inequality arises not from the Essence, but from the Order and Manner of Subsistence. Thus the Father was greater than he: greater than he, as to his Original, the Son being begotten by him; and

greater

greater is he that gives, than he that receives; but as to his Essence they are both one God; and so equal. Three Ways, says he, the Father was greater than *Christ*. First, with Respect to his Human Nature. Who can doubt, but a dependant Creature is inferior to that Almighty Being that made him? Secondly, with Respect to the eternal Generation of his Divine Person, as he was begotten of the Father, who is therefore called the Fountain of the Deity. Thirdly, with Respect to his Office, as Mediator, for thus he was the Father's Servant. O wonderful Condescension! That the eternal Word, who as such, was equal with the Father, should in Compassion to us accept a Station, and sustain a Character, in which the Father was greater than he. Now, says he, though under each of these Considerations, God the Father is greater than the Son; yet none of them are inconsistent with the Son's being God by Nature. I might add what some of our most learned Bishops, *Pearson*, *Bull* and *Stillingfleet*; or some eminent Divines, Dr. *Grabe*, Dr. *Hicks*, and many more have said; but this is enough to shew that I have advanced no new Notion: and indeed, if I had, I might have expected a much more learned Person than Mr. ----- to have

chastis'd me. Some Persons seem, I am sorry to say it, to be very indifferent about the most weighty Points of Religion, or entertain wrong Notions in Respect of Things that concern their eternal Salvation; and will neither take any Pains themselves to be better inform'd, nor admit of Instructions from other Persons. How easily might Mr. ----- have consulted Dr. *Hammond* and Mr. *Burkitt* upon the New Testament, and been better satisfy'd about the Meaning of that Text, before he condemn'd in so public a Place the Account I gave of it. Pray, Sir, seeing you are his Neighbour, and are often in his Company, importune him to read with a little more Care and Attention all I have said about this Text, and then put this plain Question to him; if he have a Son, will he not allow him to have all essential Properties belonging to Mankind, and to be as much, though not so great a Man, as himself; and yet in his relative Capacity to be inferior or subordinate to him, as his Father? I do not mention this as a parallel Case, but only by way of Illustration. There is some Analogy or Resemblance, though not an exact Agreement between them, as will be shewn by and by.

Again

Again there are ſome Perſons, as you yourſelf, Sir, told me, who will not believe the Trinity, becauſe they cannot comprehend it; and aſk with *Nicodemus* in another Caſe, how can theſe Things be? Pray, Sir, aſk theſe Gentlemen, if you chance to meet with them again, who deſire them to believe, how this is or can be, *i. e.* how there is or can be a Trinity of Perſons in the Unity of the Godhead; or how the three Perſons are ſo inſeparably united as to be one God? All that we deſire of them is, to believe according to what is reveal'd, and leave ſecret Things to God, or to a future State; when we ſhall have a farther Knowledge of divine Things, and know as we are known. All that we deſire of them is to believe that it is ſo, without troubling themſelves about the Manner how it is ſo. That there are three Perſons, and yet but one God, is plainly reveal'd; this we are to believe, becauſe it is reveal'd; theſe three Perſons we are to worſhip in the Unity of the Godhead, becauſe we are baptiz'd in the Name, or into the Belief and Profeſſion of them. And upon the Sincerity of this Belief or Profeſſion depends the Salvation of all ſuch as have had proper and ſufficient Opportunities and Means of Inſtruction. But pray, Sir, don't theſe Gentlemen

tlemen of ſo comprehenſive and exalted a Genius, believe many Things to be, without comprehending the Manner, how they are? Do not they believe that God is eternal, *i. e.* without Beginning and without End? And yet is it poſſible that the Underſtanding of Man, being finite and limited, ſhould form a clear and comprehenſive Notion of Eternity, *i. e.* of a Thing unlimited and infinite? I mention'd in my Letter, by way of Illuſtration and that I might not be miſunderſtood, the Union of the Soul and Body, which no Man of common Senſe and Reaſon will deny to be, though the wiſeſt cannot tell or explain how it is. Does not the Mind of Man think and reflect, add, ſubtract, multiply and divide? Does it not reaſon and deduce one Thing from another? Does it not determine itſelf, and act freely, and move the Body, and ſtop its Motion as it pleaſes? Can any one certainly tell how all this is done? How the one commands ſo powerfully, and the other obeys ſo readily? Are there not many Things above one's Reaſon, and which the Mind cannot comprehend, nor form a diſtinct and clear Idea of, and yet cannot be aſſerted to be contrary to our Reaſon? They may indeed be above our Comprehenſion; but do they contradict

tradict any of those plain and self-evident Principles, which are implanted in our Understanding? Who, for Example, is able to apprehend, how the smallest Particle of Matter, which can be assign'd, is in itself capable of being for ever divided? And yet this is so far from being contrary to my Reason, that it informs me the Thing must be so, though I am not able to comprehend the Manner of it. And no Philosopher, that I know of, hath ever pretended to deny this; there being no Part of Matter, because Matter implies Extension, though ever so small, that can be so much as conceived to be absolutely and in itself indivisible. We are well assured that a Man born blind may be convinced and induced to believe, that there is such a Thing as Light, because his Neighbours tell him so; although he knows not what it is: And dare any one disbelieve God, when he tells him, that there are three Persons in the Unity of the Divine Nature, or that the Divine and Human Nature are united together in the single Person of *Christ*, because he does not understand or comprehend, how they are so? I might instance in many more strange and wonderful Things in Nature, as also in Mathematicks, in Physicks, in Astronomy, in Navi-

Navigation and other Arts and Sciences, which those, who are ignorant of them, will scarce believe, and which to those, who know them, are incomprehensible. Can they explain to us exactly the Configuration of Plants, or the Formation of Insects? Can they give us a perfect Account of that amazing Variety of Objects which one Blade of Grass presents to our View; or how the Roots of Trees fetch up, as it were by subterraneous Pipes, all the Juices that are necessary to feed them? Can they tell us, how Grains of Corn multiply in the Ground, and as they corrupt, germinate and spring; or how the teeming Earth, like a kind Parent, restores with Usury more Ears than she had received Grains? It would be endless as well as needless to multiply Questions of this Nature. The Flux and Reflux of the Sea continue still a Mystery, notwithstanding the many Hypotheses that the most ingenious Philosophers have form'd to solve them by. How contradictory to common Sense and Reason does it seem to be, that two Lines should be so drawn, as still to come nearer to one another and yet never meet, though drawn *in Infinitum?* And yet this is demonstrably true in Mathematicks. May it not seem to some an incomprehensible Myste-

ry,

ry, that Water ſhould be turned into Ice, and a River congealed into a ſolid Rock? Or who would not think it impoſſible, that tranſparent Glaſs ſhould be made out of Sand, which is a dark or opake Body; and yet this may be ſeen done any Day in ſeveral Parts of the Kingdom? What need I mention infinite Diviſions of Numbers in Decimal Fractions, when 'tis acknowledged, that there is no Number actually infinite; or the Myſteries of the Loadſtone and the Needle, which no Man can any more give a ſatisfactory and certain Account of, than he can find out the Philopher's Stone? There are none of our Sceptical Gentlemen in Religion, but who believe, that either the Earth or the Sun moves; and yet I deſire any of them, who diſbelieve a Trinity of Perſons in the Unity of the Godhead, becauſe they cannot comprehend how the three Perſons ſhould be ſo united as to be but one God, to let me know what Comprehenſion they have of the Motion of the Earth; how it can be ſuppoſed to move fifteen Miles in a Minute, a Quarter of a Mile or two Furlongs in a Second, and above ſeven Yards in a Third; and yet they ſeem all the while to ſtand ſtill, and are inſenſible of it, and acknowledge no Motion can be in an Inſtant.

 I leave

I leave it to themſelves to calculate, as well as they can, the prodigious long Race of the Sun through the ſpacious Firmament, if it be ſuppoſed to move; and if they want any Aſſiſtance or Direction, I recommend to them the Peruſal of the Chapter of the Libertines in Monſieur *De la Bruyere*'s Characters of the Manners of the Age. Seeing then, Sir, many Things are admitted in Nature and Art, attended with ſome Difficulties that the Reaſon of Man cannot ſurmount, or wherein are ſome Knots too hard for our underſtanding to untie: Why may not Religion claim the ſame Privilege that Philoſophy does; and the Book of God claim the ſame Allowances that are made to the Book of Nature? The next Time, Sir, you are in thoſe Gentlemen's Company, who, you told me, made ſuch Objections to my Letter, adviſe them to ſubmit their Reaſon to Faith, and believe what is reveal'd concerning the Trinity, without enquiring into the Manner how it is. The *ſecret Things belong unto the Lord our God, but* thoſe Things which are *revealed*, belong *unto us and to our Children for ever, that we may do all the Words of this Law. Deut.* 29. 29. I cannot do better than conclude this Letter not only for my own Juſtification, but for the

Satis-

Satisfaction or Instruction of all sober Men, with the Words of Archbishop *Synge* in a small Tract called, *A plain and easy Method*, &c. which I would beg leave to recommend to the serious Consideration of all Persons, who have been baptized into the Christian Faith.

Sect. 35. "All, who profess Christianity "agree in this, that there is but one God a-"lone; but the Controversy concerning a Tri-"nity in the Unity of the Divine Nature has "been no small Disturbance to the Church. "The Doctrine I take to be very evidently "grounded upon the Holy Scripture, the Au-"thority of which is on both Sides allowed; "for the Father, the Word or Son, and the "Holy Ghost are there very often spoken of "exactly in the same Manner, as we always "speak of three several Persons; and of each "of these Persons such Things are frequently "said, as cannot agree to any but God. Where-"as all the Objections, that are made against "it, are grounded upon this palpable Mis-"take; that the Objectors always understand "the Words, Person, Nature, Substance, and "all the other Terms made use of in this "Dispute in the same Signification, as we use "those Words when we speak of Men like

"our ſelves: For Example, three human Per-
"ſons, ſay they, are three diſtinct Men;
"therefore, if they were really three Divine
"Perſons, they muſt be three diſtinct Gods.
"Again, it is abſurd, ſay they, to imagine,
"that God, who is omnipreſent and ſupreme,
"and infinite in Power, can be ſent by any
"one; but the Father is ſaid to have ſent the
"Son, and the Father and the Son are ſaid to
"have ſent the Holy Ghoſt; from whence
"they would infer, that therefore neither the
"Son nor the Holy Ghoſt is God, with much
"more to the like Purpoſe, that frequently
"occurs in the Writings of the *Unitarians*.
"But ---- have we not the very ſame Argu-
"ments againſt God's Wiſdom and his Love
"to Mankind, as the *Unitarians* bring againſt
"the Trinity of Perſons in the Unity of the
"Godhead? And may we not after the ſame
"Manner argue againſt every Attribute and
"Action of God? which for Want of more
"proper Words we are forced to expreſs in
"the very ſame Terms, that we make uſe of
"in ſpeaking of whatever correſponds there-
"unto in Man. Here then a ſober *Unitarian*,
"as well as every other Man, muſt, I think,
"have Recourſe to the Principle juſt now laid
"down, *Sect.* 34. (*viz.* the ſame Difference
"that

"that there is between the Root, Spring or "Principle, from whence any Property, Habit, "Attribute or Action proceeds, the same there "must be between the Properties, Habits, "Attributes or Actions themselves; however, "for Want of sufficient Variety of Words we "are often forced to call them by the same "Name) and say, that as the eternal and per-"fect Nature of God is altogether of a diffe-"rent Kind from the created and imperfect "Nature of Man; so is there fully the same "Difference between the Properties, Attri-"butes and Actions, that exist in, or proceed "from these two several Natures. ---- Al-"though therefore, God is not wise with "that Kind or Sort of Wisdom that Man "is, nor loves with that Kind or Sort of "Love, that Man does; yet we truly and "properly say, that God is wise, and that "he loves: and we demonstratively prove "these Truths from *the outward* Effects of "both, although our weak Understanding "cannot frame a Notion, what the Divine "Wisdom and Love internally, and in them-"selves are, when at the same Time we are "sensible that we enjoy the Benefit and Com-"fort of them both. This I take to be a ra-

"tional

"tional and ſatisfactory Anſwer, and ſuch as "is to be made uſe of, whenever any Argu- "ments are drawn from the bare Signification "of any Words that are in common applied, "both to God and Man, or any other Crea- "ture. Let us then ſee, whether this very "Anſwer will not in the ſame Manner clear "up all the Difficulties that ariſe from ſuch "Sort of Objections as are uſually made a- "gainſt the Doctrine of a Trinity of Perſons "in the Unity of the Godhead. For when "we ſay, that there are three Perſons in the "Unity of the Divine Nature, we do not "mean ſuch Kind of Perſons as three Men "are, any more than by Wiſdom, Love, or "any of the Attributes or Actions of God, we "mean the ſame Sort of Qualifications or Ac- "tions, as we do when we apply the ſame "Words to Man. But our Meaning (as well "as in ſo ſublime a Doctrine I am able to "expreſs it) is, that in the Divine Nature, "which is but one, (and that numerically as "the Schools ſpeak) there is a threefold Diſ- "tinction internally, and, as it is in itſelf, al- "together incomprehenſible to us; but out- "wardly in the Holy Scriptures repreſented "to us under the perſonal Names of the Fa- "ther, the Word or Son, and the Holy "Ghoſt

"Ghost or Spirit; to each of whom we there "find distinct personal Actions ascribed, and "personal Expressions always accomodated. "Although therefore, it is beyond the Power "of Human Understanding to conceive this "Mystery as it is in itself; yet by Faith we "believe it to be as God has represented it "unto us; and this Representation we take to "be a sufficient Foundation for all such Du-"ties as are consequent upon or arise from "the Doctrine. And because it is impossible "to express our Meaning without the Use of "Words, nor will any Language furnish us "with other Words to express the Things of "God, but such as are used to signify what "we apprehend to have the nearest Correspon-"dence thereto in Man; for this Reason we "are forced to make Use of the Words *Per-"sons, Substance, &c.* not that they do denote "unto us the Things as they are in them-"selves, for in that Respect we expressly own "them to be incomprehensible; but only as "they are analogically, and according to our "Capacity, represented to us by God in his "Holy Word, as a Foundation for several "Christian Duties. And when the Son or the "Holy Ghost are said to be *sent* (which was "the other Objection mention'd) by *sending*

"it

"it is not intended, that *Directions were given* "*them to go from one Place to another* in the "Manner as one Man does to another, when "he is said to send him; but to *send*, as it "is thus applied to the Father or Son, signi-"fies an Act *in it self* indeed to us incom-"prehensible; but as near, as may be in "God, corresponding to the Action of *send-*"*ing* in Man, and which, for Want of a "more proper Word, we are forced to ex-"press by the same Name. This I take to "be a rational Answer to those two Objec-"tions of the *Unitarians*, which I have above "proposed, and sufficient to satisfy every Man, "who is content with St. *Paul*, as long as he "is in this Life, to know the Things of God "in Part, *&c.* Nor is there any other Dif-"ficulty in the Holy Trinity, as it is ex-"pressed either in the Holy Scripture, or in "the Creeds and Liturgy of our Church, but "what in the same Manner may be fairly ac-"counted for *Sect.* 36. I take this Way of "accounting for the Attributes, Actions and "Persons of the Godhead to be not only in "itself very satisfactory; but also, if rightly "understood, of great Importance towards "putting an End to all those Disputes that "have arisen in the World about these Mat-

"ters;

" ters; and if the Reader is not satisfy'd with
" what I have here said, I desire him, before
" he passes his Censure, to have Recourse to
" the School Divines, who have handled this
" Subject; particularly I recommend to him
" *Tho. Aquinas contra Gent. cum Com. Fran.*
" *de Silv. Lib.* 1. *Cap.* 32, 33, 34. where he will
" find these three Things expresly maintain'd.
" First, That when we make use of the same
" Words in speaking of God, and of any o-
" ther Thing; such Words are not to be un-
" derstood univocally, or in one and the same
" Signification, the Nature and Essence of
" God not being of the same Kind or Sort
" with that of any other Thing whatsoever.
" Secondly, That yet such Words are not to
" be understood to be meerly equivocal, or
" the same in Sound only, but without any
" Manner of Agreement in their Sense or Sig-
" nification. For there may and ought to be
" an Agreement, though not an universal
" one, in the Signification of every Word,
" that is applied to God and any Creature;
" that is to say, when at any Time we speak
" of God in the same Words as we do of a
" Creature, the Use of such Words ought not
" to be altogether groundless and precarious,
" but founded upon some just and sufficient

 " Reason.

"Reaſon. Thirdly, Therefore that ſuch Words "are always to be underſtood *analogically*, that "is to ſay, with ſome reaſonable and well-"grounded Reſemblance of Signification in "ſuch their different Application: For ſince "in this Life we have no immediate or ſen-"ſible Knowledge of God, but only trace as "much as we can of his Nature and Attri-"butes from thoſe Effects, which immediate-"ly incur into our Senſes and Underſtanding, "and of which we can demonſtrate him to be "the Cauſe; either we muſt have no Con-"ception at all of ſuch his Nature and Attri-"butes, or elſe we muſt conceive them, as well "as we can (and in ſuch a Manner, as may "be a ſufficient Foundation for our Duty) "from ſome faint and dark Reſemblance, "which we apprehend to be between them "and thoſe of ſome of his Creatures. Or if "the Reader is not willing to trouble him-"ſelf with the difficult Terms of the Schools; "let him read his Grace the Lord Archbiſhop "of *Dublin*'s Sermon, entitled *Divine Pre-"deſtination and Foreknowledge conſiſtent with "the Freedom of Man's Will*, where he will "find this Matter very clearly and ſatisfacto-"rily handled." So much I thought proper to tranſcribe from the excellent ſmall Tract above-

above-mentioned, becauſe therein this Matter is clearly repreſented, and it is entirely agreeable to my own Sentiments. I need add no more (having already, I am afraid, too much treſpaſſed upon your Patience) but that I am with the greateſt Reſpect,

SIR,

Your moſt obliged humble Servant, &c.

FINIS.